Discussion with Pakistan to Stop Cross-Border Terrorism

117. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the details of the issues which are going to be discussed with Pakistan in order to stop cross-border terrorism to resolve the differences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) President Musharraf had in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004 reassured the then Prime Minister of India that he will not allow any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.

Government have, repeatedly, conveyed to Pakistan the criticality of the fulfilment of President Musharraf's reassurance, and to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism on a permanent basis.

Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his meeting with President Musharraf on September 24, 2004 in New York had mentioned unambiguously that the entire dialogue process was based on the commitment of January 6, 2004. During his meetings with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, External Affairs Minister Shri K. Natwar Singh has emphasized that an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence was necessary for the dialogue to be sustained and productive.

The matter was also taken up during the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to India on November 23-24, 2004 in his capacity as the Chairperson of SAARC.

Indians in Foreign Jails

118. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that approximately 7,000 Indians are languishing in foreign jails;

(b) the number of the persons, out of them imprisoned for violation of labour laws, illegal stay and civil/criminal cases; and

(c) the assistance being provided to such Indian nationals for their release/delivery of early justice to them/ensuring proper living conditions and humane treatment in jails?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes. It is a fact that approximately, 7,000 Indians are in foreign jails.

(b) In most cases, the charges are for minor offences such as violation of immigration/visa rules, non-possession of valid travel documents, economic offences, violation of employment contracts or rules concerning employment, etc. There are also a few cases of grave offences relating to drug trafficking, adultery, theft and murder.

(c) Indian Missions/Posts abroad provide all possibile assistance in such cases. This assistance includes consular access, getting Indian nationals released if possible, ensuring that there is no miscarriage of justice, facilitating speedy trials and enabling proper living conditions and treatment in the prisons.

External Affairs Ministers' Level Talks Between India and Pakistan

119. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the specific topics discussed between India and Pakistan at the External Affairs Ministers' level talks at Islamabad and New Delhi, when the two met in August and September last; and

(b) the decisions arrived at as a result thereof and the follow up action taken so far by the two Governments to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) External Affairs Minister, Shri K. Natwar Singh, met the Pakistani leadership, including Foreign Minister Kasuri, during his visit to Islamabad from July 19, to 23, 2004 for the SAARC Ministerial Conference. They, *inter alia*, shared perceptions on all aspects of bilateral relations. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the wide range of contacts taking place at governmental and non-governmental levels between India and Pakistan, and reiterated the importance of continuing the dialogue process in an atmosphere free from violence, and to tackling the scourge of terrorism with renewed vigor.

During their meeting on September 5-6, 2004 in New Delhi, the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan reviewed the overall progress in